

From: rwalding@jbcc.harvard.edu
To: Joshua Lederberg <jsl@rockvax.rockefeller.edu>
Date: Mon, 1 Mar 1999 09:55:09 -0500
Subject: Re: trying to connect -- shades of 1975

Dear Dr. Lederberg,

I've just returned from browsing the NLM site for the Joshua Lederberg Papers, and I'm delighted with it. As a former historian of science, I'm very aware of the value of the kind of documentation that they are doing of your work. It will be a wonderful resource.

I don't call it hagiography -- just good sense and proper appreciation!

I'd be delighted to look over the papers you have relating to the US scientists' responses to Nazi racial theories. Unfortunately, I never published the work I did with you, because I returned to medical school and got swallowed up by the maelstrom of nights on call and holding surgical retractors. As you know, picking up a project once it's been left for years is a daunting task.

So I'd welcome the chance to look at the papers and, assuming they're not too much of an embarrassment, I'd be honored to have them included in the NLM project.

I know that Fritz Redlich's biography has been highly praised, and I need to get to it. Nazi history was a big part of my work in the History of Science Department at Harvard -- my undergraduate thesis was a look at the factors that promoted doctors' cooperation with Nazi racial hygiene programs when Hitler came to power in 1933. In fact, I was doing research in Germany on this topic when I met the two delightful historians (then at U. Wyoming or Montana -- I can't recall their names) who told me of your interest in similar matters. That's how I contacted you.

I would bet that your son studied with some of the same people I worked with at Harvard. I was particularly involved with Barbara Rosenkrantz, less so with Everett Mendelson. I used to think medical training was difficult until I watched friends in academia go through the tenure track struggles! I hope David is surviving.

I practice psychiatry part-time, but I'm now doing research nearly full-time on the effects of child abuse and domestic violence on family functioning. I try to combine my psychoanalytic background with more rigorous empirical methods. I seem to have remained in the murky interface between biology and social science.

I'll look forward to seeing the papers. And let me know if there's anything else I can do to help.